

Hi Everyone

This month I have been successful in obtaining a vehicle for use in the community health department in Jobarpar area. As I was thinking about how beneficial it will be it made me think about the many forms of transport there are within Bangladesh. I have probably travelled on most of them however I will share with you about only a few.



In the cities and larger towns the van-garry is used to transport items such as sacks, carpentry items, fruit/vegetables and steel etc however in the village areas they are used to transport people. I have been travelling a lot on these vehicles and I can say they are probably the most uncomfortable form of transport in Bangladesh or anywhere in the world!!



Usually four people ride on the back as the poor driver has to pedal through very difficult and uneven roads throughout the villages. There is no support at all and as you sit on wood every bump (of which there are many) feels extremely uncomfortable.

This also got me thinking about how many people in this land are living in conditions that are not at all comfortable. Very recently I had the opportunity of visiting a very ill man. I discovered he had lung cancer and was now terminally ill. The nurse and I visited regularly in his last few days of life. The family did not ask me for anything. I was able to obtain some pain relief for the man and tried to make his last few days as comfortable as possible, which were not at all easy.

When I looked at the very hard bed he was laying on, how he had no fan to cool him down and the very basic home that was leaking water from the heavy monsoon rain I realised how fortunate I was to have so much and how even though he had so little it was just acceptable to him. This lovely gentleman died very peacefully and I am glad I had the privilege to be involved with him and his family in his end-of-life care.



The local buses are to say the least very scary. To get on and off they don't really stop just slow down and it's a case of jumping at the right time or clinging on so not to fall off. Most times however the conductor will shout to the driver when a woman is getting on or off to stop at least just long enough to get off or on, albeit very quickly. I have been pushed, squashed, trodden on and knocked about on the bus. This made me think of life generally in Bangladesh.

Life here is not easy as people cope with so much. As I visit in the village areas I hear tragic stories of family difficulties, many young women who are left alone due to a husband who decides to leave, a loss of a job may mean the family are unable to pay for their children's education or a poor harvest may mean limited or no money for the family to buy food. At times we are at a loss as to how we can help and who do we choose?!



Many people who know me well will be aware how frightened I am of water and boats. In Bangladesh at times the only way to get to your destination in the rainy season is by boat due to flooding especially in the village areas. I am continually amazed at the resilience of the

local people and especially the children to accept this and not to worry.

I am not that keen on insects and other creatures however I am getting used to very large cock-roaches (Bangla tele-poka), frogs (Bangla bang), snakes (Bangla shap), bats (Bangla badur) and all sizes of ants (Bangla pepra). As for water, boats and crossing bamboo bridges there is no fear from the local people and children. I wish I could say the same about me, maybe I too will get used to the boats as I have the beasties?!

God has provided so much for me and I continually pray for the local people as they have to deal with so much hardship not just sometimes but mostly every day.



This vehicle is a CNG; (no it's not me in the back) it runs on compressed natural gas hence the name. We do not have any of these in the village areas as there is no gas to supply them. It is a very popular form of transport and one I mostly use while in Dhaka. I have been able to have some very enjoyable conversations with CNG drivers while travelling. Most of them want to know where I am from, what I am doing in Bangladesh and why I have no husband. I respond by being interested in

them by asking about their families. They are also really pleased when I try to speak to them in Bangla, although not very well.



This is a form of transport which is not only uncomfortable, unsafe and overfull at all times it is however very popular and cheap for the local village people and in the cities. It reminds me of how congested the cities are and how so many people in the villages live in very small overcrowded homes with very little comforts and certainly no luxuries.

It also made me think about how many people compromise their safety in this land. The roads are just sheer madness in this country. Dhaka has relentless jams, no one stays in their proper lanes, car horns are just constantly being sounded and in the rural areas most people drive like maniacs on any side of the road!!

As I thought about all the forms of transport I thought of life in general and how we all cope in different situations. The things that we are frightened of, and worried about, the risks we do or do not take, how many of us think of our safety yet others don't really feel it's important.

It got me thinking about Matthew 6:25-34 and especially verse 33 *'But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you.'* I used to be someone who worried a lot; I still do a little however much less as I trust my Lord and Saviour more and more each day to be with me.

So as I journey by road whether in city or in the rural areas I ask God to surround me with His protection. As I serve the local people I ask that He guides me to those who need me most and as I worry about being on a boat I ask that there will always be someone to help make life feel calm even when I don't!!

Thanks to God for

- Successfully obtaining a vehicle for the community health department
- That I am feeling so much better
- For the restful time I had in Dhaka
- Many friends who have made my time in Dhaka so comfortable
- Visit of Sarah and the children

Prayers for

- My continued good health
- Safety as I travel in the new vehicle
- Children doing exams at present
- For families who are just finding life difficult at the moment as their teenagers have great difficulties seeking admission to colleges and universities

Thank you for all your prayers for me and the work in this region. Until next time!

Pat